

San Francisco Picks 6 Startups to Partner with City Agencies

Jason Shueh | March 13, 2014



With the aim to innovate and improve services, San Francisco today announced the names of six civic technology startups that will collaborate with city departments through a four-month Entrepreneurship-in-Residence program.

“San Francisco is home to the world’s greatest entrepreneurs, the ones who have ‘disrupted’ numerous industries, and we are bringing those same disruptive technologies to improve delivery of city services for our residents,” said Mayor Ed Lee in a prepared statement released Thursday. “The Entrepreneurship-in-Residence program brings together government and startups to explore ways we can use technology to make government more accountable, efficient and responsive.”

The city selected the six startups from 200 applications. Applicants came from 25 cities worldwide and represented innovations in education, healthcare, transportation, public utilities, public safety, infrastructure and the environment.

San Francisco's Chief Innovation Officer Jay Nath said the endeavor, to start March 24 and run until the end of July, will be a testing ground for future iterations of the program and be a source of creativity and inspiration for city departments.

"We think this is going to part of a broader conversation that's going to be happening nationally," he said, "and we hope it'll continue here in San Francisco as well."

The Entrepreneurship-in-Residence program is intended to connect innovative new companies with the leaders of city departments to create solutions that lower costs, boost revenues and enhance efficiencies. Startups chosen for the first round of the program specialize in law enforcement, air quality, urban planning, permit mapping, emergency communications, and navigation and location services.

City departments working with the startups will be public health, police, planning, emergency management, transportation and the San Francisco International Airport.

However, the program is not meant to supplant or bypass the city's current procurement process, Nath said. Rather, the joint effort is designed to spotlight budding companies with fresh solutions for city challenges.

"We think we're sort of on the vanguard here." Nath said. "We see San Francisco as a city that's driving innovation, and by building these bridges with the startup community — harnessing the best and brightest talent to work on government problems — it can create a tremendous amount of value for the public sector.

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"If they [startups and departments] want to seek a commercial solution out there in the market space, they need to follow our transparent and competitive procurement practices that we have in place today."

According to the city, these six companies were chosen for the program:

[MobilePD](#) will work with the San Francisco Police Department on public safety and civic engagement. MobilePD is a mobile technology startup that enhances social engagement with the community to reduce crime.

[Birdi](#) will work with the San Francisco Department of Public Health on air quality and health issues. Birdi is a smart device startup that measures air quality as well as other public health metrics and provides recommendations on how to improve individual and neighborhood air quality.

[Indoo.rs](#) will work with the San Francisco International Airport on enhanced navigation and location-based services. Indoo.rs is an Internet of Things startup that provides location-based services, indoor navigation and advanced sensors.

[Synthicity](#) will work with the San Francisco Planning Department on new simulation, planning and urban development tools and technologies. Synthicity is a software startup that builds simulation tools and solutions for urban development and planning.

[BuildingEye](#) will work with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency to engage residents and communities. BuildingEye is a software startup that makes permit and noticing information easier to discover through a mapping interface.

[ReGroup](#) will work with the San Francisco Department of Emergency Management on enhanced communication services. ReGroup is a software startup that provides multi-channel emergency notifications.

This story was updated at 3:05 p.m. to include an interview with San Francisco Chief Innovation Officer Jay Nath.

<http://www.govtech.com/local/San-Francisco-Picks-6-Startups-to-Partner-with-City-Agencies.html>